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ABSTRACT

A profile of the extent of English usage and instruction in Mexico gives an overview of the following elements: its role and status alongside Spanish and within the educational system at all levels; teacher education; program accreditation; required reading skills; the supply and professional support of English teachers; the type and availability of instructional materials; educational administration and planning related to English teaching; English instruction outside the educational system; British and American support for English instruction; British commercial opportunities for production of books, videotapes, computer hardware and software, and courses; creative writing; and current language research. The conclusion is that English remains the most important foreign language in Mexico, and that its future is assured as long as American economic influence continues. It is suggested that if British English is to maintain its importance, the British role in English language instruction must be augmented. (MSE)

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ENGLISH TEACHING PROFILE

Country: Mexico

Date: JUNE 1985

1. ROLE AND STATUS OF ENGLISH

Attitudes to the English language in Mexico reflect, in many ways, those of Mexico to the USA. It is inevitable but not totally desirable. Pragmatically its mastery is viewed as one of the keys to success. Politically its intrusion is often regarded as another sign of America's cultural imperialism.

This love-hate relationship explains in part, at least, some seemingly unusual aspects of the role of language in Mexico: the marked reluctance of even fluent speakers of English to actually use the language, even with poor speakers of Spanish: the enthusiasm with which reading comprehension was and is accepted by some as the means as well as the end of English studies: the popularity of French, German and Italian lessons among certain classes of the population, etc.

Nevertheless, intelligent Mexicans are aware of the fact that they need English not only as a means of access to the USA, but also as a means of access to trade, commerce and learning in the world outside. Mexicans without a knowledge of English are at a disadvantage in applying for many of the better jobs in Mexico.

Happily for Britain, one way out of the dilemma is to regard English as predominantly a European language. As a result the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute (AMCI), the BBC, the British Council and British publishers are all organizations that benefit. This, together with the quality of the service given, has led to British English and British ELT (English Language Teaching) having a surprisingly large influence in a country so geographically close to the USA.

This has been aided by the fact that the Americans keep a very low profile in this area, their large network of language schools being very loosely controlled by the Mexican-North American Cultural Institute in Mexico City.

English is not used as a means of communication in business or academic circles. However, its use as an auxiliary is almost essential in both contexts. When a person manages to get a senior executive job without a good command of English, he very often receives tuition organized by, and at least partially paid for by, the company.

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A student is expected to have a reading knowledge of English at university level in most subject areas. This is implicitly recognized by the inclusion in the reading list of books written in English, and in the almost universal provision of Language Centres where English is by far the most popular language taught.

2. ENGLISH WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Education in Mexico is divided into five stages: 1) pre-primary or kinder; 2) primary; 3) secondary; 4) upper secondary or preparatoria, and 5) tertiary. The provision for English teaching varies between the two sectors.

Pre-Primary and Primary

In the state sector there is no provision for English teaching at pre-primary or primary level. However, in the private sector there are many "kinders" that claim with varying degrees of accuracy to be bilingual, and for that reason are popular among the wealthier classes that want to give their children a "good start in life".

The situation is very similar in primary schools. The Ministry of Education does not offer English. Private schools do. This is probably most efficiently done in the binational schools where there is a fairly large concentration of native-speaking English pupils, though other schools also perform creditably.

Secondary

The state system introduces English at secondary level, at the age of about twelve. There are two main streams - the general and the technical. Both have the same syllabus and, although the latter appear to take the teaching of English rather more seriously, neither have great success. This is due to three main factors: 1) the lack of teachers both fluent in English and trained in practical methodology; 2) the few periods a week typically devoted to teaching English; 3) the large classes of fifty or more that are the typical recipients of English classes. Private schools generally give more and better education at this level.

The upper high school or preparatoria area is the most complicated in the Mexican educational system. This is because while a "prepa' may be a continuation of a secondary school, as it is in general in the private sector, it may also be run by a tertiary institution to prepare students to study there. The tertiary institutions may be general (universities) or technical (the National Polytechnic or regional technical institutes). They may also be private or public and, in the case of the latter, federal or state run.

There is no common syllabus here, though a tronco comun or common core has been introduced by the Ministry of Education or Secretaría de Educación Publica (SEP) in the prepas for which it is responsible. As far as English is concerned, there is variation too. For example the older prepas, the Escuela Prepatoria Nacional (EPN) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (UNAM) with 70,000 students and over 200 teachers, teach English to classes of thirty or so throughout the three years of the course leading to the bachillerato (roughly 'A' Levels). However, another preparatory system run by the same university - the CCHs (Colegio de Ciencias y Humanidades) - only

teaches English in the first year, with classes of about seventy and an emphasis on reading comprehension or translation. This, unfortunately, tends to be the norm throughout the other prepas too. It means that there is typically a gap of two years between a student's last formal studies of English and the beginning of his university career, with all the demands on English that his reading list normally implies at this time. It is worth mentioning that, in practical terms, the teaching of English at prepa level tends to assume that the student has no knowledge of English as a result of his studies at secondary level. Teaching at prepa level is from scratch.

Tertiary

At the tertiary level the demand for English is usually met by the provision of a Language Department or Language Centre that a student can attend on a voluntary basis for little or no cost. Some of these institutions are also now in the business of producing qualified teachers of English - see below.

The emphasis in many of them is on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), usually defined as reading in their particular subject areas. Many materials have been produced, some published by commercial publishers and many by the universities themselves. Unfortunately, there is a great amount of institutional rivalry in Mexico which leads to two unfortunate consequences. Firstly, that the "ESP wheel" continues to be reinvented for no obvious reason in one institution after another. Secondly, some of the better publications, e.g. those produced in CELE (the Centro de Ensenanza de Lenguas Extranjeras) at UNAM, do not get the public that they deserve.

Among the institutions that have produced teaching materials, in addition to CELE at UNAM, are the branches of the UNAM on the outskirts of Mexico City; the ENEPs or Escuelas Nacionales de Estudios Profesionales, at Aragón and Zaragoza; the branches of the UAM (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana) at Xochimilco, Iztapalapa and Azcapotzalco; and the University of Veracruz at Xalapa.

English is not a formal requirement for entrance to university in most parts of the state system, though it is a requirement in some universities such as the Iberoamericana, the Instituto Tecnolocico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), etc.

Attempts to create vocational schools in Mexico have failed because they tended to convert themselves into yet another type of preparatory school for the Polytechnic or regional technical institutes. However, the creation of CONALEP (the National Council of Professional Schools) seems to have overcome this problem.

In general English teaching is the same as in similar institutions at this level, i.e. it is taught, with an emphasis on reading comprehension, in the first year of a three year course. The important exceptions to this generalization, however, are the Departments of Tourism and Catering where English is taught for the three years with emphasis on the four skills of speaking, listening, writing and understanding.

Tourism with allied subjects is also taught to degree level in many universities and in the Polytechnic. It is a course that is unusual in the attention it gives to oral skills in English at university level.

It is possible to do academic degrees with a large English content at UNAM, ITESM, the University of Veracruz and the Iberoamericano.

Centros de Lenguas Extranjeras, variously known as CELE or CENLEX, are to be found at most universities in the larger towns. Their function in public universities, and some private universities too, is to offer a service to the community at large as well as to the narrower university community. This enables them to fulfil the role of adult education centres as far as languages are concerned. All language centres offer English and French. Most offer Italian and German. CELE at UNAM and CENLEX at the Polytechnic offer a wider selection of languages.

English is also taught in many private schools (see Section 7).

There have been many attempts to introduce the Open University type of system into Mexico. However, in general they cannot be said to have been very successful, partly due to communication problems, lack of television back-up and a (consequent?) big dropout rate.

Teacher Training

The escueles normales superiores (ENS - advanced teacher's colleges) run a scheme whereby graduates of the escuela normal, who are entitled to teach in primary schools, can become secondary school teachers by attendance at summer schools over a six-year period. They must also, of course, be monitored at their place of work through correspondence.

There is also an open prepa system run by the SEP in which English is included in the first two semesters. The first semester is a four skills course. The second a reading comprehension course.

The SEP trains English teachers, under central control, at escuelas normales superiores in Mexico City. Sonora, Aguascalientes, Morelia, Querétaro, Veracruz and Campeche. There are twenty-four other, similar institutions run either privately or by the various state governments.

The universities too are becoming increasingly involved in the training of teachers. CELE at UNAM runs a one-year teachers' course (formación) and a two-year Master's Course in Applied Linguistics.

Recently there has also been a growth in the number of degree courses in applied linguistics, language teaching etc. Whatever the name, the main purpose is the training of English teachers.

Because of the size of Mexico City branches of UNAM called ENEPs - Escuela Nacional de Estudios Profesionales - are to be found in various parts of the City. One of these is at Acatlán. They started their licenciatura (degree) programme in applied linguistics in November 1984. They were able to apply strict selection procedures and still end with over 100 students in their first-year programme. A very large proportion of the students are practising teachers who will continue with their work while studying.

The University of Guadalajara is also developing a degree course with a different emphasis. It was founded partly in response to a perceived need for better training for their existing teaching staff, and partly because the University wanted to fill a gap in its academic programme. In consequence, a scheme was developed whereby the first two years of the four-year degree course was simultaneously a training course for existing university teachers. The University has said that this qualification will be necessary for its teachers by the end of the decade. However, successful completion of the first two years can also serve as entry for the second two years, completion of which leads to a licenciatura. This programme which, at the time of writing, is also in its first year (1984/85), has enrolled over thirty

existing teachers of the University, has official British Council support, and is organized by a former AMCI head of teacher training. Among other plans there is a scheme in the offing for an academic link with the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS), University of Reading.

There are other degree courses in language teaching or applied linguistics at the Autonomous University of Puebla, the University of Nuevo Leon in Monterrey, the University of Chihuahua, ITESM Monterrey and the University of Yucatán, Mérida. All these courses have received or will receive book grants from the British Council.

The Ministry of Education and the National University also run in-service training schemes and other academic forums for teachers.

Three types of scheme are run by the Ministry:

Seminars, which are organized over a few days or a week, in which outsiders give talks.

Academias, which are meetings of local teachers presided over by one of their members.

Courses, which are given by the Dirección General de Mejoramiento - the in-service section of the Ministry. These are more systematically run over a longer period of time.

The CELE at the National University and the CENLEX at the Polytechnic also organize courses, which are called "encuentros" or meetings, to which language teachers from other universities or parts of the polytechnic system are invited. Although the proceedings are usually in Spanish and other languages are represented, English and English teaching are the two subjects most frequently discussed.

These encuentros are usually held around the time of the National Congress of MEXTESOL (see Section 3).

Examinations

All students are given a school leaving certificate on leaving secondary school, in which grades for all subjects including English are given by the teacher.

Examinations for entry to the preparatoria system are set by the universities or the SEP. These include one in English which is set by the central office and marked locally.

A pass in English is usually given as the result of the first year's work. This is generally necessary for a student, in order to get his bachillerato certificate.

Entry to public universities after finishing prepa tends to operate on a supply and demand basis. A much higher standard is required for law than for marine biology, for example. Places are very competitive. However, a further qualification in English is not a formal requirement for entry into a state university, although it is in some of the better private universities such as the Iberoamericana, La Salle, etc. Private universities very often have extra requirements, frequently involving a qualification in English.

Some universities, notably ITESM, Monterrey, demand a pass in English as a necessity for graduation. However, a de facto pass in reading comprehension is necessary in all universities, in the sense that a large proportion of the set books for all courses are untranslated English textbooks (see below). Yet in many government universities the basic textbooks are in Spanish - often translations of American undergraduate texts.

The present government is committed to a policy of decentralization in education. So in due course, when the necessary infrastructures have been developed, the States will be encouraged to create their own syllabuses and choose their own lists of recognised textbooks. However, this programme is not really under way as yet and the planning department of the SEP is still effectively in control of this side of things.

There is sporadic talk of the SEP producing its own English textbooks, at prepa and secondary level only. At the time of writing one has been produced by the SEP for prepa level but there are no certain signs that more will be produced. The possibility is always there, however, as set books exist for other subjects such as social science at secondary level.

Inspection

There is little or no inspection of schools outside the Federal District, where Mejoramiento (Departments of In-service Teacher Training) and the Inspectorate of the secondary technical schools do some work of an advisory nature. At present most school inspection done by the SEP has to do with administration rather than academic standards.

The Polytechnics (IPN - Instituto Politecnico Nacional) have a system for inspection or advice in their associated prepas or CECyTs (Centros de Ciencia y Tecnología), though this does not involve actually entering the classroom at any stage. Rather, it advises on syllabus examination and class content, as well as organizing seminars and attending Academia meetings, etc.

UNAM usually demands that all the teachers in its associated prepas should take an examination set by CELE.

Reading

Nearly all university students in Mexico are expected to have a reading knowledge of English. The reading lists in some science subjects include up to 80 per cent of English books and they rarely have fewer than 30 per cent of them. Although cribs are available they tend to be unreliable and students are inclined to buy scientific dictionaries and other aids to doing their own translations.

ESP in a Mexican context tends to mean reading comprehension though, as noted above, attention has been paid to texts in various special subjects.

From prepa level onwards books are available, produced by universities and publishers, that concentrate on trying to teach students more sophisticated reading strategies. The process continues with more specialized texts at university level.

There is no real ESP at secondary level though a pilot programme is being prepared, by the English advisers for the secondary technical schools, which concentrates on reading comprehension.

3. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Outside the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute and the Cambridge School there are relatively few British teachers of English in Mexico. However, those that there are generally teach at university level. This is true of Americans and other English-speaking expatriates too, as it is of those Mexicans who have worked in the United States for some time and acquired a good working knowledge of the language. The pace of population and educational growth in Mexico is such that a fluent or even good knowledge of the language is often enough for a person to teach at university level, though frequently without tenure or indeed any job security at all.

Outside the ENS system there is little teacher training for teachers of English in Mexico apart from the new licenciatura courses, the Formación Course of teacher training at CELE (mentioned above), training at some of the private and more expensive universities such as the Iberoamericana, and an MA course at the University of the Americas. This gap tends to be filled by language institutes which give courses to aspiring teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). The Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute gives probably the best training course, which although only officially recognized by one state - Jalisco - is widely respected unofficially by many institutions, including the SEP. This course lasts two hundred hours, demands excellent English of its entrants and gives them a good grounding in practical techniques with a sound, if brief, grounding in theory.

Other institutions that give teacher training courses for TEFL are the Anglo-American Cultural Institute and the Mexican North-American Cultural Institute.

Professional organizations

There are three important professional organizations dealing with language teaching in Mexico.

The first of these is MEXTESOL, modelled in part on TESOL. It is the only one influential in ELT and the most familiar of the three to people outside the country. It generally uses English as its means of communication and correspondence, and continues to have very many expatriates on its committees.

MEXTESOL has a full-time secretary in Mexico City. The rest of the committee, however, is honorary. This has caused problems due to the lack of adequate financial management in some years, and there are now plans to create a rather better paid organizer who will take more financial responsibility. It is divided into Chapters, each of which in theory meets from time to time for seminars given by its own members. They also organize one regional convention a year to which speakers from outside the area are invited.

Once a year there is a national convention to which speakers from outside as well as inside Mexico are invited to contribute. The British Council usually sponsors one or two speakers who are well-known in the field of TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) to attend this conference which, in some years, has brought as many as 2,000 participants together.

There is a growing tendency to have a smaller number of MEXTESOL conventions outside Mexico City, organized on a regional basis by two or more Chapters working together. In addition to helping financially this puts less strain on people from Mexico City, who are much in demand at these conventions.

AMMMLEX was founded partly in reaction to the influence of expatriates and commercial interests (including private schools) in MEXTESOL, and partly to include the teachers of other languages. This is the Asociación Mexicana de Maestros y Maestras de Lenguas Extranjeras which holds meetings periodically in various parts of the country. The teachers in this organization are predominantly from the public sector and the language of discussion and papers is always Spanish.

AMLA (Asociación Mexicana de Linguistica Aplicada) is another association which concerns itself with theoretical matters of linguistics.

An association of Publishers in Mexico Involved in ELT, was formed in mid-1985 with the intention, among other things, of holding at least three conferences annually. Here they can feel free to exhibit their educational wares in a rather less inhibited fashion than at MEXTESOL where there are sometimes attempts to diminish the publishers' influence, if not their contributions.

These conferences are additional to the seminars that various publishers give in different parts of the country to encourage the use of their books. The seminars are given in association with the SEP if their books are accepted for use in schools.

4. TEACHING MATERIALS

Book acquisition is the responsibility of the individual student. Books are not provided, as part of the course, by any government system, nor is there any central purchasing or distribution system for books, with the exception of primary level textbooks in Spanish. Before the economic crisis of 1982 more than ten publishing companies were represented in Mexico in one way or another. The crisis and its consequent devaluations led to the withdrawal of the representations of all but Longman, Macmillan, Nelson and the Oxford University Press.

Another effect of the devaluations was to make British books prohibitively expensive in Mexico and set publishing companies thinking seriously about local publishing.

Macmillan went the furthest along this line with the establishment of Macmillan de México and the local publication of some reading comprehension materials. This has the distinct advantage of ensuring that the books are available at all times. However such a strategy does not necessarily mean that the books are considerably cheaper, as paper prices in Mexico are considerably higher than the world average. Oxford University Press also printed their books in Mexico for a while, when the importation of books was made difficult after the economic crisis of 1982. However they now import all their books again from Britain and the USA, not finding a significant cost differential in so doing.

Longman too import all their books, a policy that has become more profitable since the recent devaluation of the pound against the dollar.

The same is true of Thomas Nelson.

There are also many American publishers in Mexico, the most prominent being: Fondo Educativo (Mexican subsidiary of Addison Wesley); McGraw Hill; and Regents (Editorial Panorama). Other British and American companies gain access to the market by distributing through the network of bookshops that handle the majority of imported English language books in Mexico City and the provinces.

The bookshops that stock most British ELT books are: 1) The Librería Británica, Río Ganges No 64, Col. Cuauhtémoc, 06500 México, D.F; 2) Delti Bookshop, Texas No 118, Col. Nápoles, 03810 Mexico, D.F; 3) The American Bookshop, Constituyentes 920, Lomas Atlas, 11950 México, D.F. The more important Spanish bookshops also stock ELT books, but lack specialized staff in this area.

The Librería Británica has branches in Monterrey, Torreon, Hermosillo and Puebla. Delti has a branch in Guadalajara. The publishers tend to use local distributors who sometimes sell to the schools direct, but mainly through local bookshops.

The state secondary schools have an approved list of books which is:

1st Grade:

My First English Book. Hess, McGraw Hill Ediciones Pedagógicas.
English 2001. Velázquez Huerta, Susana. Sécsa.
Basic Junior ACE. Macmillan.
English Through Teamwork. Orozco Reyes, Carlos. Fernández Editores-L/Longman.

2nd Grade:

My Second English Book. McGraw Hill Ediciones Pedagógicas.
English 2002.
Basic Junior ACE. Macmillan
English Through Teamwork.

3rd Grade:

My Third English Book. McGraw Hill Ediciones Pedagógicas.
Basic Junior ACE. Macmillan.

Textbooks for secondary schools must be chosen from this list. However teachers may teach without a book if they wish.

In order for textbooks to be accepted, they have to pass a vetting process by the Consejo Nacional Técnico de Educación and the Dirección General de Planeación Educativa of the SEP.

At higher levels of the public sector and in private institutions the choice of textbooks is much freer. A wide range of British and American texts is used.

Generally speaking, little use is made of video cassettes and films outside the better language schools and the better organized universities. Audio cassettes are used but, because of the tax on imported tapes, copies tend to be made locally which are frequently of poor quality. There is no import tax on books in English, nor is an import permit required.

English literature has been one of the main victims of the economic crisis. Candidates for entry to the few courses available have plummeted in the few centres that there are: the UNAM, ITESM, Monterrey, and Veracruz.

Mexico, however, has a flourishing book publishing industry and also imports many books from Spain and other parts of the Hispanic world. In this way many come to an awareness of English literature through translation.

BBC materials have been used for some years at BANAMEX, where an adviser from the English Projects Unit (see Section 7) helped install the system, which is now thriving with more than 150 groups.

Televisa - the Mexican independent television and broadcasting company - has recently bought the rights to televise Follow Me to both Mexico and the USA, with its own presenter and back up programme. Also associated with the programme are booklets, video cassettes and audio cassettes.

The BBC provides ELT radio programmes to various radio stations. These include:

On We Go	Promedios de Leon, Gto.
Pedagogical Pop II	" " " "
On We Go	Radiodifusora de la Casa de la Cultura, Campeche
English Today	Radio UNAM, D.F.
Chimes	" " "
Pedagogical Pop I	Radiodifusora de la Casa de la Cultura, Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiaps
Pedagogical Pop II	" " "
Pedagogical Pop III	" " "
Folkangle	" " "
Singalong	" " "
Calling All Beginners	Radio Azatlán, Tepic. Nay.
Folkangle	Radio XHVIC - FM, Tamaulípas, Tamps.

Radio UNAM, D.F., intends to use Pickwick Papers and Follow Me in 1985. Radio UNAM has also expressed interest in this programme.

5. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO ENGLISH TEACHING

Funds for education are divided between those given to the Ministry of Education and those given to the National University through the Secretaría de Programación y Prespuesto - the Finance Ministry.

In a country where approximately a third of the population are in full-time education the sums of money and organizational problems involved are huge. This is a contributory, if not determining, factor in the division of the education budget - and many of the complications in the structure of the Mexican system are due to this division.

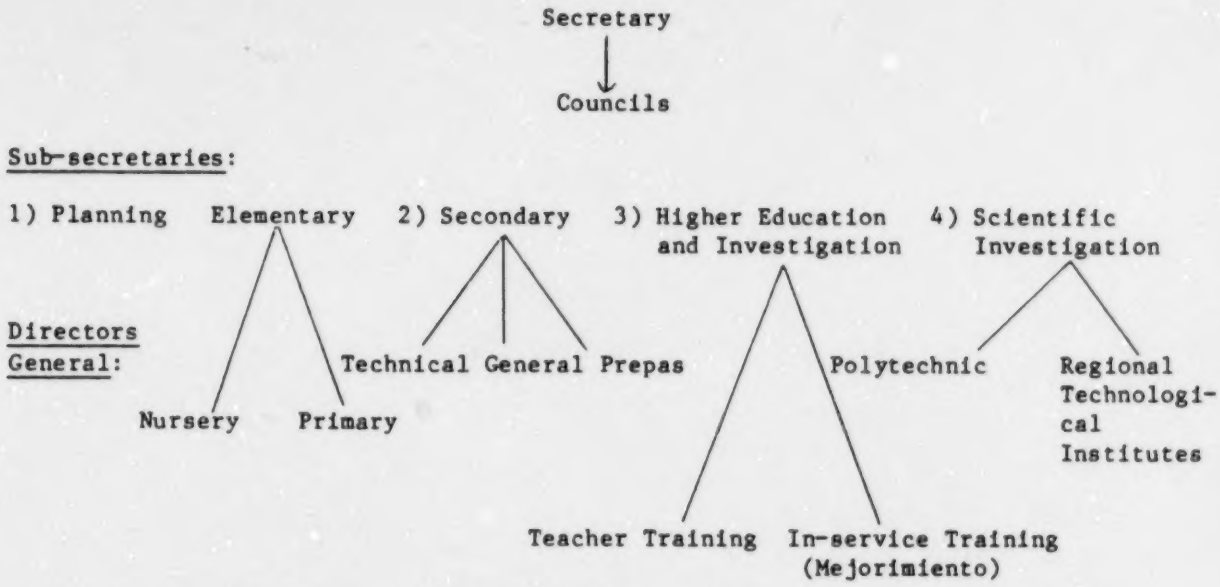
The Ministry of Education or Secretaría de Educación Publica (SEP) is responsible for all publicly funded schooling up to the end of secondary level. It exerts pressure on private schools to incorporate themselves, i.e. have their studies validated. It also funds: the National Polytechnic and its prepas (called CECyTs), other prepas called Colegio de Bachilleres, and at present partly funds the public universities in association with the states in various parts of the Republic.

The present government is committed to a policy of decentralization. Though it is difficult to know precisely what this will mean, the general trend will undoubtedly be for the states and their attendant Ministries to get more money so that they will be able to run their own affairs. The major problem at the moment is identifying enough talented and trained people at the local level who are able to cope with the increase in administrative responsibility that such a change involves. In the long term, however, it is bound to happen.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for all aspects of education, including sport and culture as well as technical and vocational education. There are four upper layers to its structure:

Secretary
Councils
Sub-secretaries
Directors General

Below is a simplified organogram of the Ministry's administrative structure, omitting those aspects which are of less importance to the academic side or of little importance to ELT.



In general: 1) chooses the books for English; 2) the Direcciones Generales at Secondary and Technical control, among other things, the teaching of English at that level. They are also responsible for the teaching of English at prepa level where the SEP and not the UNAM or the states is the responsible agency; 3) Higher Education is responsible for English teacher training at the escuelas normales superiores and in-service training through the Dirección General de Mejoramiento; 4) the Subsecretaría of Scientific Investigation is responsible, among other things, for English teaching in the National Polytechnic and the regional technical institutes.

6. DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

This is covered in the previous Section, and elsewhere in this Profile.

7. ENGLISH OUTSIDE THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Only since the 1930s has the teaching of English as a foreign language in private elementary schools become widespread. Since the early sixties the number of bilingual Spanish-English elementary schools has grown very considerably. At this level there are now four main categories of school:

a. bilingual kindergartens

b. bilingual primary schools

c. bilingual cultural schools

d. private elementary schools offering English as a Foreign Language as one of the compulsory subjects.

The number of bilingual kindergartens continues to grow very rapidly. Children at this level increasingly divide their time between mother tongue-Spanish and English as the language they hear from the teacher and begin to use for themselves. Many of the bilingual primary schools have no truly bilingual programme but in effect teach English as a foreign language, often - understandably - with a much heavier emphasis on the Spanish curriculum. The degree of proficiency in English acquired by students attending these schools varies considerably - depending largely on the school's general attitude and the linguistic ability of individual teachers. Few pupils could be said to be really bilingual. The number of schools in this category is increasing very rapidly indeed - in the provinces as well as in the Federal District.

Three schools in Mexico City teach through English, leading to the O and A level examinations. These are the Greengates School, the Edron Academy and the Lancaster School. The last is an official bi-cultural school, resulting from an agreement signed by the Mexican and British governments.

There are, however, relatively few bilingual-cultural schools like the above and they are rarely found outside such urban areas as Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Puebla. They are in general very expensive, but the teaching is of a high professional standard. The class size tends to be much smaller than in most Mexican schools; the programmes offered are genuinely bilingual - a complete curriculum in English and Spanish. The schools' aim is to provide a sound elementary education in which the pupils master both languages and cultures fully. The teaching is in English rather than, as elsewhere, of English, and the results on the whole are extremely good.

The time devoted to English as a foreign language in private elementary schools varies enormously: it may be as little as one hour a week, or as much as one hour a day. Results are uneven - often not very satisfactory, since motivation is generally low and the English language proficiency of many of the teachers not of a very high standard.

Private English language institutes abound in Mexico. Many of them are run on a commercial basis; many are of a very dubious standard - but there is certainly a great need to supplement the English teaching offered by the state system. The role of the better ones is vital, especially in the following areas:

a. provision of general English classes for students of school age, who do not really learn much English while attending classes provided by the state;

b. general English classes for large numbers of adult students who either never had the opportunity to learn English earlier or, again, need to remedy the low level of proficiency they achieved at school;

c. more specialized English classes for adults who need English in their jobs in fields like tourism, banking, international trade, and technology. Such classes, at present in their infancy, are expected to become of major importance in Mexico in the eighties;

d. provision of a wide range of in-service teacher-training courses for English teachers in all areas. Here the better private institutes lead the way, providing vastly more practical programmes than those offered in state institutions.

The emphasis in nearly all these schools is on English as a tool for career purposes rather than English as a means to an alternative culture and literature. The only institution outside the public sector which gives active support to the teaching of English literature and British culture is the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute.

The public library system, controlled by the SEP, has very few English language books on its shelves.

8. BRITISH SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The British Council decided twenty-five years ago that their English teaching operation should be passed over to the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute, which operates as a non-profit making institution. Since that time the Institute has grown considerably, so that there are now five branches in Mexico City and three outside in Guadalajara, Monterrey and Puebla.

These institutes have over 22,000 students and more than 300 teachers - including part-timers. A number of teachers are still recruited in Britain. Until recently certain of the senior staff received British minor benefit contracts, though this is no longer the case.

Two other language schools in Mexico have substantial British connections, namely the Cambridge School of English - a branch of a school with the same name in London - and the Instituto Britannia de México. This school, like the AMCI, offers teacher training programmes.

The English Language Officer (ELO) and his staff cooperate widely with the AMCI in many spheres. Council support has been given to AMCI-initiated projects, e.g. video and the introduction of micro-computers. Each year a good number of AMCI teachers go to British Council-sponsored courses in the UK, and Council-sponsored visitors from Britain give seminars to the AMCI.

Similarly, AMCI support has been given to Council projects, to ELT courses for secondary school teachers and university teacher training programmes. AMCI and the British Council work together in such organizations as MEXTESOL, and in university-sponsored seminars.

The best examples of cooperation in recent years have been:

1. The establishment of AMLIRC (The Anglo-Mexican Library, Information and Resource Centre). Here in addition to receiving information from and about the UK a visitor can find books, tapes, films and video cassettes on ELT, and information about language learning and teacher training opportunities in ELT in the UK.

2. Another important collaborative venture was the establishment of the EPU (English Projects Unit). This is a joint venture between the British Council and the AMCI which has aimed, and till now has been largely successful, at developing specialized courses for particular ELT needs in Mexico. The EPU has established itself as a major provider of general and tailor-made ESP courses in important banks within the country. It has helped to implement BBC courses in others. It is involved in a major job of trying to improve the teaching of English in the naval schools belonging to the Ministry of Communications. Several other courses have been arranged on a relatively short term basis and more short and long term courses are in the pipeline.

Although the EPU's services are expensive in comparison to some private schools, whose teachers are often less qualified and less permanent in the country, there are signs that Mexicans are willing to pay for quality when the needs are great enough and the competitive services proved inadequate. The EPU as a revenue earning organization aims to satisfy these needs.

The British Council has supported various aspects of English teaching in the public sector over the years.

While there has been continuing Council support, aimed at the improvement of English teaching in the state secondary sector - where there is the greatest demand - the most effective area of support has tended to be in the universities.

Two posts were established by the Key English Language Teaching Scheme (KELT). The first was in the National University (UNAM) at the Language Centre (CELE). This post, which lasted from 1980 to 1984, provided an expert to help in the field of applied linguistics, with particular reference to the teaching of English. It supported a one-year programme for teacher training and a two-year programme for a Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics.

This post was the culmination of many years of funded collaboration between CELE and the University of Edinburgh, which the Council had helped to foster by means of exchange of persons.

The second post was at the Technical University in Monterrey, where the Council established a self-access reading programme for students of other subjects.

The Council has also helped provincial universities who felt that they needed to give their prospective students or their teachers some aid in the teaching of English. This is a growth area in the Mexican context. Teachers of English, and indeed prospective undergraduates, are willing to spend four years in learning how to teach - and sometimes learn to speak - English.

Usually these courses are in contrast to the more theoretical courses of the ENS, and consequently of more appeal to those who wish to teach English outside the normal secondary school system for which the ENS prepares them.

The licenciatura course in Guadalajara would, at other times, perhaps be KELT-supported, but its beginning coincided with a time when no ODA funding, particularly on the ELT side, was envisaged in Mexico. Consequently an AMCI teacher who was an internationally recognized authority on ELT was subsidized by the British Council to set up a programme. In essence it used an AMCI teachers' proficiency course as a framework for teacher training within the university and developed a licenciatura course using that as its basis.

Other programmes of this type have also received British Council support. The one most favoured at present is an Open Licenciatura in which a person who continues to work could, by means of correspondence, attendance at summer schools and monitoring by a tutor, gain a licenciatura and keep his job. Although this course is approved by various universities, there have been severe problems in the suggested means of putting it into practice. The need is still there, as is the possibility of Council support. The time for implementation, however, has not yet seemingly come.

The Council has also been involved in an ESP programme in the ITESM and the University of Nuevo Leon in Monterrey. One of the results of this programme was Read in English, published by Longman, which takes a more radical approach to reading comprehension in Latin America than most.

Over the years the Council, by visits in both directions, has ensured that the British contribution to ELT in Mexico should be recognized by the relevant authorities both private and public - MEXTESOL and the Ministry of Education. Recent visitors have included Mario Rinvolucri, Brian Abbs, Michael Scott and Dick Allwright. All these visits help to ensure the continuance in the public mind of English as a UK language in Mexico.

9. AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

The Americans give little overt support to ELT in Mexico. Its proximity and economic power ensure that its language, culture and society are a constant preoccupation of nearly all Mexicans. American promotion and support to its culture is, therefore, unnecessary and could be counter-productive.

There is no direct counterpart to the British Council ELO in the American Embassy though other British Council activities, particularly educational counselling, are obviously present.

Less help is probably given by the Americans to the North American Cultural Institute than by the British to the AMCI, though this is of course hard to quantify.

However, for the reasons implicit as well as explicit in this survey, there is no great American input to ELT in Mexico and little Anglo-American co-operation in this field in comparison to other parts of the world. Clearly the situation is unlikely to change.

10. OTHER AGENCY SUPPORT

Nil.

11. COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

We have already implied that proximity to the USA is as much a help as a hindrance to British commercial interests in the field of English language teaching in Mexico.

Books

British publishers are aware of the possibilities for book sales. The private sector is where they do particularly well. The public sector is rather more difficult, but Macmillans particularly have made definite progress here too. While the present competitive position of the pound against the dollar continues, British books on ELT in Mexico should continue to prosper.

Video cassettes

Because of import tax and widespread pirating there has never been a great demand in Mexico for imported audio cassettes. In the case of video cassettes the situation is less clear. There is a considerable demand for video among the rich, and signs that educational institutions too are beginning to think in video terms. Nelson and Macmillan are beginning to make inroads into the video market. The results achieved by the BBC programmes in video form will be significant. If they establish themselves in the video market others may well be able to follow.

Computers

The microcomputer market is in a state of flux in Mexico. Apple is probably the best established, certainly in the ELT field, using Scott Foresman and Addison Wesley software. However, in addition to possible developments in the public sector where UNAM and SEP are trying to develop both hardware and software, three British firms are to be found in the market: ICL, Sinclair and Acorn.

Acorn and Sinclair actually produce computers in Mexico. Because of the difference in specifications it has been necessary to change the software, so that it is compatible with those of North America. This has not helped the British side of the ELT market. However, the situation has not yet become clear in this area. The appointment of a computer specialist as English Language Officer in 1985 should certainly help to develop this field considerably.

Courses in Britain

Between fifteen and twenty-five teachers go to the UK for British Council summer schools every year. Usually 80 per cent or more are supported by some kind of scholarship. Among those who can afford it, the prospect of going or sending their children to the UK to study is still very attractive. The cost of travel is the major inhibiting factor. However, overall trends are encouraging. The British Travel Association predicts an increase in the number of visitors to Britain by 65 per cent for 1985 over 1984. The peak of 1980-81 may never be reached again. The rate of exchange was so favourable that many people took advantage of a situation that is not likely to return in the forseeable future.

Some language schools operate through agents here. Publicity and help for them all is available from the British Tourist Authority and the British Council (AMLIRC).

12. CREATIVE WRITING

There is little or no creative writing in English in Mexico because of the relative unimportance of Engish studies in the universities.

13. CURRENT RESEARCH

Most research in recent years has concentrated on ESP and related matters, and has tended to be concentrated in the National University and the Metropolitan University in Mexico City. As language centres in the Metropolitan University have been absorbed by Faculties of Communication, which have a considerable research programme, research here is likely to continue.

14. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

No entry.

15. GENERAL STATEMENT

English is still by far the most important foreign language in Mexico. Its future is assured as long as the US economic influence continues. The British role in ELT has to be worked at, however, if British English is to continue to have the importance it had in the past and still has.